

AMENDMENT(S) TO THE CLAIMS

1-11. (canceled)

12. (currently amended) A method of making an industrial fabric comprising the following steps: applying a dispersion of particulate polymeric material to a batt of fibres, thermally activating the dispersion of particulate polymeric material and thereby softening the particulate polymeric material such that the particulate polymeric material undergoes at least partial flow and fuses to itself and to the batt of fibres; wherein the activated dispersion of particulate polymeric material results in a layer which forms the surface of the industrial fabric and which includes the activated dispersion of particulate polymeric material extending vertically within the batt of fibres, the industrial fabric being a press felt of a papermaking machine.

13. (original) The method according to claim 12, wherein the layer is a continuous polymer-batt fibre matrix layer.

14. (previously presented) The method according to claim 13, wherein more than 20% weight add on of the polymeric material is applied.

15. (original) The method according to claim 12, the layer is a discontinuous layer containing a mixture of batt fibres and a polymer-batt fibre matrix.

16. (previously presented) The method according to claim 15, wherein 0.1% to 20% weight add on of the polymeric material is applied.

17. (previously presented) The method according to claim 12, wherein a diameter of the polymeric particles applied is in the range from 0.1 to 600 microns.

18. (original) The method according to claim 12, wherein the dispersion comprises at least one binder, and wherein the binder is in liquid and/or solid form.

19. (previously presented) The method according to claim 18, wherein the binder is at least one of co-polyamides, co-polyesters, polyvinyl acetate, polyurethane and nitrile latex rubbers.

20. (previously presented) The method according to claim 18, wherein the binder is included in an amount of 0.05% to 2% based on the dispersion volume.

21. (original) The method according to claim 12, wherein the dispersion comprises at least one viscosity modifier.

22. (currently amended) The method according to claim 21, wherein the viscosity modifier is at least one of (a) Newtonian, (b) Pseudo-plastic, (c) pseudo plastic types based on polyurethane, acrylic, or polyamide, and (d) guar or natural gums for water-borne systems.

23. (previously presented) The method according to claim 21, wherein the viscosity modifier is included in an amount of 0.05% to 5% based on the dispersion volume.

24. (original) The method according to claim 12, wherein the dispersion comprises at least one anti-settling agent.

25. (original) The method according to claim 24, wherein the anti-settling agent is water soluble and further comprises at least one of a polyamide, polyacrylate and polyurethane.

26. (previously presented) The method according to claim 25, wherein the anti-settling agent is included in an amount of 0.1% to 2% based on the dispersion volume.

27. (original) The method according to claim 12, wherein the dispersion comprises at least one wetting agent.

28. (currently amended) The method according to claim 27, wherein the wetting agent includes one of (a) a surfactant which is not ethoxylated ether, and (b) ethoxylated ether.

29. (previously presented) The method according to claim 27, wherein the wetting agent is included in an amount of 0.05% to 2% based on the dispersion volume.

30. (original) The method according to claim 12, further comprising the step of calendaring the fabric.

31-33. (canceled)

34. (previously presented) The method of making an industrial fabric of claim 12, further comprising the step of needling the batt to a base cloth.

35. (previously presented) The method of making an industrial fabric of claim 12 wherein the thermal activation of the dispersion of particulate polymeric material bonds the particulate material to the fibres.

36. (previously presented) The method according to claim 15, wherein 1% to 5% weight add on of the polymeric material is applied.

37. (original) The method according to claim 12, wherein a diameter of the polymeric particles applied is in the range from 1 to 300 microns.

38. (original) The method according to claim 12, wherein a diameter of the polymeric particles applied is in the range from 20 to 150 microns.

39. (previously presented) The method according to claim 18, wherein the binder is included in an amount of 0.1% to 0.5% based on the dispersion volume.

40. (previously presented) The method according to claim 21, wherein the viscosity modifier is included in an amount of 0.1% to 2% based on the dispersion volume.

41. (previously presented) The method according to claim 25, wherein the anti-settling agent is included in an amount of 0.2% to 0.25% based on the dispersion volume.

42. (previously presented) The method according to claim 27, wherein the wetting agent is included in an amount of 0.05% to 0.25%, based on the dispersion volume.

43. (previously presented) The method according to claim 12, wherein the step of thermally activating includes at least one of heating and applying incident radiation to the dispersion of particulate polymeric material.

44. (previously presented) The method according to claim 12, wherein the thermally activated dispersion of particulate polymeric material results in a discontinuous layer.